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LETTER DATED 29 APRIL 1994 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I regret to have to inform you that the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) has reported a further deterioration of the situation in Kigali and other parts of Rwanda.

The capital city is effectively divided into sectors controlled by the Rwanda Government Forces (RGF) and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) respectively, with frequent exchanges of artillery and mortar fire between the two sides. UNAMIR reports strong evidence of preparations for further massacres of civilians in the city and there are several large concentrations of civilians who fear for their lives but enjoy little effective protection. Massacres continue on a large scale in the countryside, especially in the south.

A new complication is that in recent days both sides have begun to express lack of confidence in UNAMIR's impartiality and this is affecting their cooperation with my Special Representative and the Force Commander.

These developments raise serious questions about the viability of the revised mandate which the Security Council gave to UNAMIR by resolution 912 on 21 April 1994. In particular, it has become clear that that mandate does not give UNAMIR the power to take effective action to halt the continuing massacres. At best it can provide limited protection to small groups of threatened persons in the city of Kigali and it would be unable to save them if a new wave of massacres were to start. According to some estimates, as many as 200,000 people may have died during the last three weeks. This humanitarian catastrophe is rightly a matter of growing anguish in Africa and the rest of the world and demands urgent action by the international community.

In considering what action should be taken, it has to be recognized that the disastrous incident of 6 April which cause the deaths of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi has had two consequences which require different responses from the international community. First, that incident sparked a resumption of fighting between the Rwanda Government Forces (RGF) and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF). Secondly, it reawakened deep-rooted ethnic hatreds, which have plagued Rwanda in the past and which have again led to massacres of innocent civilians on a massive scale.

The revised mandate which the Security Council gave to UNAMIR in resolution 912 on 21 April is an adequate response to the first of these consequences. My Special Representative and the Force Commander have been making strenuous efforts to help the parties agree to a cease-fire and a return to implementation of the Arusha Accord. Those efforts have not yet succeeded but the present mandate and strength of UNAMIR are sufficient for them to continue.

The events of the last few days have confirmed, however, that UNAMIR's revised mandate is not one which enables it to bring the massacres under control. Some of these have been the work of uncontrolled military personnel but most of them have been perpetrated by armed groups of civilians taking advantage of the complete breakdown of law and order in Kigali and many other parts of Rwanda. It has become clear that the horrors for which they are responsible can be ended only if law and order is restored, a task which is far beyond UNAMIR's present capacity.

In these circumstances, I urge the Security Council to re-examine the decisions which it took in resolution 912 and to consider again what action, including forceful action, it could take, or could authorize Member States to take, in order to restore law and order and end the massacres. In making this recommendation, I am of course aware that such action would require a commitment of human and material resources on a scale which Member States have so far proved reluctant to contemplate. But I am convinced that the scale of human suffering in Rwanda and its implications for the stability of neighbouring countries leave the Security Council with no alternative but to examine this possibility.

I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI